

to police the streets, on bounty-seeking contractors to guard important sites such as the oil wells, and foreign nationals to carry out internal security operations in Iraq. I don't call that the freedom the President talked about last night.

Iraqis have proposed dividing Baghdad into nine sectors and policing them with Iraqi troops as American soldiers are redeployed as backups. That might work. But the U.S. most of all needs a broad political strategy that addresses the rising levels of global terrorism the Bush policy is yielding and the growing anti-American sentiment that is brewing in Iraq and the Muslim world beyond.

That strategy demands significant new human intelligence networks, not standing armies. Moreover, we need international diplomacy to engage all nations that border Iraq to seek a resolution to the strife.

Mr. Speaker, America needs a foreign policy that does not put the interests of oil and oil dictatorships above the value of human life. Just as the Bush administration took office, this country is importing an additional 1 billion more barrels of oil per year. Tell me there is no connection between our utter dependence on imported petroleum and the deployment of our precious troops to the Middle East and Central Asia.

STOP MILITARY CASUALTIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker and Members of the House, last night the President spoke to the Nation and presented his proposal to the Nation to increase the troop levels an additional 20,000 troops to be sent to Iraq to continue the war in Iraq. What the President didn't do was lay out the plan of how that would be successful, how that would be different than what we are currently doing, and how the results would be different.

The President, with his initial decision to invade Iraq, a decision that was his choice, and this was not a war of necessity, this was not a war to protect the vital interests of the United States, or the integrity of the United States or the safety of our homeland, this was a war where the President chose to go to war.

At the time he was considering going to war, he was advised by many. We all know this history of many saying not to do this and also saying that this would not work in Iraq with its history, with its culture, with its religious differences. But the President chose to go anyway, and we have been there now for 3 years. Over 3,000 young Americans have paid with their lives for this endeavor, and over 20,000 have been wounded, seriously wounded.

I have had the honor to visit with many of those soldiers as they have re-

turned to Walter Reed Hospital with life-changing, life-changing wounds. It is remarkable that they would survive them at all, a great testimony to the medical care that is available to them, but nevertheless, life-changing injuries for these young men and women.

Now the President is suggesting, with his plan for escalation, that we will send another 20,000. The fact of the matter is that American soldiers have done all that they can for the Iraqi people. The Iraqi people, the Iraqi Government, has chosen not to take advantage of having the Americans in the country to resolve their political differences, to resolve their differences of culture and religion. They have chosen to continue to fight.

In fact, we find that our soldiers more and more now are simply the targets within the civil war that is going on in Iraq; and for all intents and purposes there is no reason to suggest that that is going to change. The President has suggested that somehow the current Iraqi Government will have to meet some thresholds.

Those thresholds are absolutely contrary to the interest of that government in terms of their survival. It is asking for a betrayal of that government against its Shi'a base, and it fails to recognize how fundamental, how fundamental the clash is between the Sunnis and the Shi'a, not just in Iraq, but throughout this region. If the President had taken time before the invasion, he might have been able to understand that. But it is a fundamental clash between these two factions in Islam.

Because of the actions of this President, he has unleashed the ability of that clash to present very real rewards and very high stakes for either sides. It is not just the oil in Iraq or the governance in Iraq, but it is really about the ability of the Shi'a to spread their influence beyond Iran, to spread their influence beyond being a majority minority in Iraq, to spread their influence beyond being a minority in Lebanon or in Syria; and these are fundamental, and they go back a long time in the history in the clashes between Sunni and Shi'a and how the Shi'a have been treated in countries where they are a minority whether it is in Jordan or whether it is in Saudi Arabia or other countries in the peninsula.

This is very, very fundamental, and the stakes are very high. At this moment our troops are a pawn in that game, in spite of what the President suggests that this is about the security of the region, this is about the blooming of democracy. It is not about any of that any longer. It may have been in his mind when he signed the order to send these troops to Iraq; but the fact of the matter is, it has been overwhelmed by history, by culture, by the nature of the region, all of which he made worse by this disastrous decision of his to choose to go to war in Iraq.

The idea now that contrary to the overwhelming desire of the American

people to disengage from this area, and of this Congress that he would go forward, is arrogance that is so dangerous, so dangerous to our country, our standing in the world, and our troops in the region that immediately action should be taken in this Congress to stop this President from going forward with this very dangerous escalation that will do nothing more than add to the list of casualties by American soldiers in this region.

BRING OUR TROOPS HOME

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. HALL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HALL of New York. Mr. Speaker, before being sworn in, I was home in my district for a couple of weeks doing a listening tour traveling around the five counties that I represent, and I had dozens of my constituents come up to me and say, Please bring them home, bring our troops home.

I didn't have one person in my district in New York come up to me and say, Please send more over there.

I am proud and honored and humbled, and I must say saddened at the same time, at the prospect that as a member of the Veterans' Affairs committee of this House that I will be able and be responsible to help returning veterans from this war deal with their physical, psychological, economic, housing and other problems.

It is an honor. It is an important service to provide. But what is a shame is that we are creating so many more veterans that have so much more grievous problems, that this war is producing injuries that in previous wars might not have been survivable.

The good news is that the soldiers, our servicemen and -women, are surviving in greater numbers. The bad news is that when they come home, they have to deal with much longer periods of rehabilitation or much more serious injuries and limitations on their mobility and on their other physical capabilities.

I am reminded, standing here, of the State of the Union address 3 years ago when Ahmed Chalabi was sitting in the Presidential box next to the First Lady. At the time he was the fair-haired boy that we had picked out of Iraq to stake our hopes for creating a government in our image and likeness and our country on. So no longer is it Chalabi; it is Maliki.

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The President is telling us we can to take his word and trust that he can produce 18 brigades to spread out across the country and to work side by side with our troops.

I am not so sure that 18 brigades that are reliable and independently-functioning of Iraqi Army and police actually exist. I am also not so sure that in another couple of years it won't be somebody else besides Maliki; that